

Book Reviews

Reviews Editor: Victor Hayes

Australia - The Most Godless Place Under Heaven?

Ian Breward.

Mitcham, Vic.: Beacon Hill Books, 1988, x+ 112 pages. A\$11.95 (paper).

ISBN 0-9594192-3-3.

(The Melbourne College of Divinity Bicentennial Lectures).

Ian Breward's collection of lectures, *Australia The Most Godless Place Under Heaven?* is the worst presented book I have ever read. Errors abound. There are crimes against punctuation, against language and against style. The fault probably represents the failure of the editors to realise how hard it is to take the spoken word and put it into print. Whatever the cause, the end result is too clear to be disputed.

Any survey on a topic as broad as Christianity in Australia can be criticised with ease on the grounds of content. No-one knows enough to be comprehensive and few people have sufficient authority to be able to comment on individual events within the sweep being reviewed without the fear of being taken apart on detail. Yet history should be debated and having a go is justified if it produces renewed, constructive controversy. Judgement of this work, then, should turn on what insights it offers and how well it is likely to provoke its readers to debate its vision of Christianity.

Breward argues that "Christians cannot afford to let others define their history for them because historical memory is crucial for identity" (p.88) and

that the Christian faith has been very significant in building the Australian nation (p.90). This perspective contrasts with the idea, also noted by Breward, that Australia is "the most secular nation on earth" (p.86). This slim volume can be given credit for raising this contradiction but it adds little to resolving it. The author makes only isolated comments on the secularisation of Australia and some of what he writes is confusing. He comments at length on R.G. Menzies as a Christian layman (p.27) but does nothing toward establishing that Menzies the politician was ever influenced by Menzies the Churchman, let alone by Christian principles. Other lay people are treated in the same uncomplicated way. While it is nice to know that this or that active citizen was an active Christian, surely the question to be debated is how in their prominent role, as businessman, newspaper proprietor, politician etc. they have contributed to a Christian aspect for the Australian nation.

I suspect the big question to be debated here is the coincidence of the formation of Australia with the triumph of the secular society and whether that secular vision, often led by Christians, has produced a better form of society than one more consciously influenced by denominational or religious themes.

This book fails to tease out the larger issues because it tries to be so comprehensive. It touches on many issues but seldom does more than that. A minor theme will suffice as an example. Breward comments frequently on "revivalism" and notes the commonly

made point that this has produced none of the religious diversity that is said to characterize the United States. But is this really still a useful way of viewing personal religious experience in Australia? Breward may well have provoked more thought if he had discussed this phenomenon in a context which led into an analysis of the rise of the charismatic churches of the last decade or so. The cost or benefit to the Christian community in Australia could have been a profitable line to have pursued if discussion was the aim Breward hoped to achieve.

There are small consolations in this book and it deserved better presentation than it received. Lectures are tailored to an expected audience and this may explain the book's scope but for my mind there were themes about Christianity in Australia which if highlighted more carefully would have provoked much more debate, and therefore had more impact.

— Ken Elford
*South Australian College
 of Advanced Education:
 Sturt Campus.*

Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions: Ethnographic and Historical Studies.

Tony Swain and Deborah Bird Rose, (Ed)
 (Special Studies in Religion No. 6)
 Adelaide : AASR, 1988, x+490 pages.
 A\$29.95 (paper)

ISBN 0-908083-15-7.

(Available from Government Printer,
 282 Richmond Road,
 Netley, SA 5037, Australia).

The editors and the Australian Association for the Study of Religion deserve high praise for the publication of this superb collection of historical and ethnographic material about the relation of Australian Aborigines and Christian missions. The 33 articles reflect a wide range of perspectives on, and interpretations of, this largely unexplored field. Some of the contributors, such as Berndt and Burridge, are well known anthropologists, others are academics and professionals in the field, some are former missionaries, a small percentage are women and only three are Aborigines.

In the Introduction the editors maintain that the volume is based on two assumptions: that the Christian missions had an immense impact on the lives of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia and that these peoples responded to the mission presence in a coherent, reasoned and intelligible way. This volume is viewed as a step - and in my opinion a giant step - toward redressing the long silence among anthropologists and historians about the dynamics of change in the various Aboriginal communities as a result of Christian missions.

The book is divided into four sections, the first covering philosophical and comparative issues by leading

anthropologists in the field. The second section consists of early histories of missions to the Aborigines. The third focuses on the social context of the missionary presence and the fourth seeks to interpret the intellectual response of the Aborigines to the Christian message.

The book makes depressing reading. As an academic and intellectual analysis of the problem it is provocative, powerful and highly significant. But if one has any sympathy either for the early missionaries or the Aborigines, one could easily become depressed as one after another of the articles records insensitivity, failed programs, dire results or ugly attitudes. The relationship of Christian missions to Aborigines seems to be as tragic as the whole 200 years of relationships between whites and Aborigines in Australia. But was it?

Were there changes taking place which were quite different from those intended by the missions but which were not necessarily all bad? Can the modern ethnographer discern a level of significance and value in these changes which the first wave of interpreters missed? In the collage of analyses found in this book the reader will find several answers to these questions.

There are, I would contend, two main types of material in this collection of articles. The first is more descriptive in its approach, seeking to outline the recorded attitudes, aims and policies of the missionary enterprise as well as any specific evidence of how Aborigines responded to this enterprise. The second group is more interpretive, seeking to find a model, principle or pattern of change which provides a plausible understanding or explanation of the response of Aborigines to the mission presence. These interpretations are largely from the point

of view of anthropologists and historians rather than Aborigines, theologians or missiologists.

Many of the descriptive type articles highlight the attitudes and biases of the missionaries to the Aboriginal people of Australia. Some of these attitudes reflect the general orientation of most Westerners who had contact with Aborigines until recent years. They considered these original Australians to be dirty, uncivilised, intellectually dull, lazy and without the rights of the European invaders. Other attitudes were specifically determined by their religious denominational bias and led to the characterisation of Aborigines as pagan, heathen and 'unwashed' and their culture as degraded, corrupt and 'the work of the devil.' Missionaries clearly saw these 'blacks' as inferior and unenlightened souls in dire need of their missionary message. (e.g., Alroe and Loos).

The aim of the missionaries can be broadly described as to Christianise and civilise, to save the souls of the Aborigines and convert them to the civilised Christian way of life exemplified by the European invaders. The former goal implied, at least for most missions, a total rejection of traditional cultures, values and life-styles and the latter included developing work skills and life styles which would enable them to fit into sedentary Western modes of living. (e.g., Chase, Brady and Palmer).

A variety of mission policies and strategies are also illustrated in these articles. In some cases formal participation in Christian worship and catechism classes was the primary expectation, regardless of the level of comprehension by Aborigines who had scant knowledge of English language or liturgy (e.g., Plomley). Other missions sought to find equivalents in the local

Aboriginal language for the concepts, ideals and imagery of the Christian faith. However, most of the practices, beliefs and morals of the Aboriginal communities involved were outlawed as being totally incompatible with the Christian message. In some cases concern for souls was coupled with the development of an economically viable community as the Western mind so determined. This involved developing work skills, a work ethic and a posture of being a dependent labourer (e.g., Anderson). In quite a number of missions parents were encouraged to surrender their children to the mission so that they could be isolated from their culture and so more readily transformed into hard working Christians. In extreme cases, like in New Norcia, the children were totally isolated so that the 'raw material' of the child could be molded into a 'model black Christian', (Alroe). Respect for Aboriginal culture was a long time in coming among the missionaries. Even when they affirmed the rights of Aborigines, it seems to have been in terms of Western categories of justice not in Aboriginal terms (Green). In virtually all cases, policies assumed that the 'superior' Christian message demanded education in the 'superior' civilised way of life which the Christian missionaries brought with them.

Of special significance in this collection of articles are those which seek to interpret what happened in the missionary enterprise by employing some kind of model, principle or pattern of analysis which helps to explain the resulting phenomena. Who changed and how? What is the evidence of change? What accommodations were made and on what grounds? How was change resisted or assimilated? These are some of the overriding questions posed by these interpreters of the scene.

One rather pragmatic line of interpretation is to analyse the missionary enterprise in a given location in terms of whether it meets certain criteria of 'success'. Were the goals of the missionaries achieved? The criteria of success, however, were variously set by church officials, mission boards, missionaries in the field, outside observers and - even though they were never consulted - the Aborigines themselves. By most sets of criteria most missions are portrayed in this volume as 'failures.'

In the early period very few Aborigines were transformed into 'civilised' Christians and absorbed into the mainstream of society. Some missions closed quickly, others continued as struggling reserves and still others functioned as gateways to the goods of white society. The early goal of 'Christianise and civilise' was not met. Even later programs which were more sensitive to Aboriginal culture and ethos were rarely considered 'success stories.' (See for example, Alroe, Plomley, Anderson, Kolig and many others). One wonders whether the selection of examples in the book might have led to this overarching interpretation. Are there genuine success stories and by whose criteria? (e.g., Tonkinson, Hume).

A second line of interpretation is to focus on the social outcome of dependency and powerlessness which resulted from the work of most missions and indeed of most European organisations which invaded Aboriginal lands (e.g., Brady and Palmer, Trigger). By being deprived of land, traditional resources, sites and prestige, many groups became dependent on missions. When the time came for self-determination, they felt lost and tended to replace dependency on the mission with dependency on government bodies. Alcoholism, which

was rife in many missions and reserves, was seen as a direct result of this learned dependency. The social status and self-assurance of Aboriginals was greatly affected and, except in a few cases, the mission seems to have done little to prepare people for self-determination, return to traditional lands or the assertion of social rights in Western society. In fact, some missions condemned the Aboriginal Land Rights movement as the work of the devil (Rose). Yet recent revival movements suggest that Aboriginal Christianity may provide access to a 'greater power' that breaks the dependency cycle (e.g., Tonkinson).

A third approach is to interpret the scene in terms of how the various Aboriginal communities, from the resources within their own culture, resisted, used and/or partially incorporated aspects of the Christian cosmogony or life-style (e.g., Thompson). One model for this kind of interpretation is that of social exchange. Ritual incorporation in the Christian community was not necessarily conversion or submission to the faith but rather viewed as an exchange for goods and support which Aboriginals needed or desired in view of changing circumstances. Thus the Christian ceremony was *added* to the ritual wealth of the Aboriginal community not substituted for it (e.g., Willis). Another model suggests that where the mission presented the Christian cosmology as a radical either-or (as with Pentecostals) rather than a both-and cosmology typical of Aboriginal culture, the Christian message was viewed as an invasion and often rejected even to the point of conducting ritual parodies of Christian worship as 'debil debil dreaming' (e.g., Rose).

A fourth type of interpretation analyses the process of evaluation and

transformation of the Christian message by the Aboriginal peoples from the orientation of their own cultures. Differing belief systems exist which are the result of a process whereby aspects of Christian cosmology have been transformed into world views which are consistent with diverse Aboriginal cultures, be they urban, traditional or come combination of these. Some of these may be hidden and local, existing alongside denominational Christian programs and destined to surface as Aboriginal communities gain prestige and a sense of their own theology. Other changes are more forceful, taking the form of Aboriginal Christian revivals (e.g., Brady and Palmer) or strong nativistic movements (e.g., Pedri and Pedri-Odermann, Koepping). Or again, these changes may be interpreted more broadly on the basis of diverse cosmological models. Thus, while the place-oriented cosmology of Aboriginal Australians necessarily transformed the time-oriented stories and message of Christianity it found room in its cosmology for a God of undifferentiated world Space (Swain).

Assessments of the social change effected by the missionaries presence are numerous and many of the articles included in this volume deserve more detailed analysis than this review permits. One may begin with Burridge and consider Christianity as a metaculture which manifests itself in various ways. But the reality of the missionary enterprise seems to indicate that it was part and parcel of the colonial system with all its problems. One may argue with Willis that perhaps Aborigines incorporated the Church into their world rather than vice versa which the missionaries intended. One may heed the voice of the Yolngu Christian, Djiniyini, who maintained that in the "new"

Aboriginal Christianity "God opens our eyes to see what is bad in our culture and what is good in our culture." (Bos p. 433). One may affirm that the persistence of Aboriginal rites, such as the Bora, is important for affirming identity amid social change (Thompson). Or one may see the visions of the New Christianity at Yarrabah as the hope for social stability in the future (Hume). However one views this complex changing world of Australian Aborigines who have responded to the Missionary enterprise in diverse ways, it is apparent that both Aboriginal Culture and Christian Theology in Australia will continue to change as a result of this encounter. And this superb volume is an invaluable aid to those interested in tracking that change.

— Norman C Habel
 South Australian College
 of Advanced Education:
 Underdale Campus.

The Religious World: Communities of Faith. 2nd ed.

Richard C. Bush, et al.

New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988.

xix + 394 pp. A\$59.95 cloth.

ISBN 0-02-317530-3.

(Available from Macmillan Australia)

Like many good introductions to a field, this contribution fulfils a dual role as an introductory textbook and as a basic reference tool, and it meets criteria of acceptance in both. Based on the considerable teaching experience of the several contributors and "consumer testing" in introductory religion courses at the University of Oklahoma, *The Religious World* reflects an effective understanding of what students want: short chapters, illustrations, maps and time lines, brief reading lists, glossaries. The intellectual content is basic but clear and straight forward, and in most instances the contributors have captured the essence of the religions being discussed without being sidetracked into discussions of adiaphora - always a temptation in religious studies.

The eleven chapters - roughly one semester's reading - open with an introduction to the questions, problems and approaches to religion; this is followed by chapters on native American religions, African religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, religion in China and Japan, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, new religions in America, and a summary of the enduring questions and quests in religion. Each chapter is appropriately subdivided and illustrated, and there is no instance in which the writer talks "down to" his students. From an Australian stand point one would want probably to excise the chapters on native American religions and

new religious movements in America, replacing them with chapters on Aboriginal religions and new religious movements in this country. Otherwise only two weaknesses detract from the text and reference value of this volume. First, the bibliographies attached to each chapter fail to lead students to other basic introductions, to personal statements of faith (Leon Uris on Judaism, for example) or to major bibliographies (Diane Choquette on new religious movements, for instance). Second, the bibliography could have been far more detailed and specific to enhance the quick reference value of an otherwise commendable text that is recommended for all libraries catering to students of religion at a basic level.

— G E Gorman
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 of Higher Education.*

The Jewish Heritage.

Dan Cohn-Sherbok
 Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988.
 [xiii] + 204 pp. A\$27.95 pap.
 ISBN 0-631-154140
 (Review copy supplied by Allen and
 Unwin Australia)

Rabbi Cohn-Sherbok, lecturer at the University of Kent and Director of its Centre for the Study of Religion and society, has attempted to provide in a single volume a full history of the Jewish religion and tradition, including its history, scripture, philosophy and modern manifestations. In doing this he takes a largely chronological approach in fifteen chapters, beginning with the ancient Near Eastern background and ending with modern Jewish thought. The chapters average twelve pages in length and do not include references, although a bibliography for further reading appears at the end. The lack of references, the number and length of chapters and general tone all suggest that we have here an expanded set of lecture notes. Could Rabbi Cohn-Sherbok possibly teach a one semester, introductory subject on the basics of Judaism? If so, these chapters would be admirable class notes; they are certainly not adequate in an introductory textbook, which should explain, stimulate and lead students far more than this does.

To begin with, the chapters are far too short to do justice to the topics, and they are written in a pedestrian style that does not inspire further study. Second, the lack of references, even for material that obviously is being quoted, is both academically unacceptable and frustrating for the student who may want to refer to the entire work. Third, many of the comments by the author can only confuse and unnerve because of their simplistic

approach. For example, the chapter on "Rebellion and Dispersion" opens with these lines: "The period following Herod's death was a time of intense anti-Roman feeling among the Jewish population..... Eventually such hostility led to war only to be followed by defeat and the destruction, once again, of the Jerusalem Temple. In AD70, thousands of Jews were deported" (p. 50). At the end of each sentence one wants to ask why, but the author ignores such a basic question and never provides more information or anything like a full explanation. To give Cohn-Sherbok his due, the book does at least describe the emergence of the various Jewish movements and schools, but nowhere is the reader given an understanding of the disputations and passions that these movements have aroused. This dispassionate and detached observation is a significant letdown, as one would expect a Rabbi to be capable of injecting academically acceptable colour into a description of his own faith - Samuel Sandmel did so most effectively in the 1960's.

For all these reasons *The Jewish Heritage* cannot be recommended for student use. Cohn-Sherbok may be suitable for addition to library collections containing other works on Jewish life and history, but it is inadequate on its own.

— G.E. Gorman
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of Higher Education

Theological Roots of Pentecostalism.
Studies in Evangelicalism, No. 5.

Donald W. Dayton

Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987.

198pp. US\$22.50 cloth

ISBN 0-8108-2037-4

(available from James Bennett Library Services)

Pentecostalism has had a resurgence of influence over the past two decades. The emphasis on baptism by the Holy Spirit, which is evidenced by speaking in tongues, is claimed by adherents as having its basis in the church of the first century. Dayton's task is to show that the modern movement is more a nineteenth century American phenomenon with its roots in Wesleyan tradition. The foreword to the book points out that modern Pentecostalism has moved from culturally illiterate beginnings to embrace upper middle class Protestants and Catholics.

Dayton begins with a theological analysis of Pentecostalism, indicating its major themes. His analysis rests on a fourfold pattern, espoused by the modern Assemblies of God denomination: salvation, healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the second coming of Christ. He points out that these four themes have general application within all branches of the movement. Chapter 2 uses the four themes to search for the theological roots of Pentecostalism. These roots rest in John Wesley's concern for the return of the practice and order of the early church. Dayton gives some attention to Wesley's understanding of the gifts of the Spirit and doctrine of salvation. Chapter 3 takes up the Methodist revival in nineteenth century America, and shows the development of the doctrine of entire sanctification stemming from Oberlin College via Asa Mahon, its president. It

was after the American Civil War, as Chapter 4 shows, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Holiness revival in Methodism occurred. Chapter 5 is devoted to the rise of the healing movement and the tension that healing, as a modern form of the miraculous, aroused between Wesleyan and Calvinistic theologies and perceptions of biblical interpretation. Chapter 6 takes up the concept of the rise of premillennialism and millennialist currents in twentieth century charismatic movements, linking these concepts with nineteenth century Holiness and eighteenth century Wesleyan themes.

Dayton's book is of value to any reader, scholar or layman, who is either an interested observer or practitioner of Pentecostalism. He writes lucidly, and his thesis shows a researcher at ease with his task. This is a fascinating and highly recommended book.

— John Cohen
Riverina-Murray Institute
of Higher Education

John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography.

Betty M. Jarboe

ATLA Bibliography Series, no. 22.

Metuchen, NJ: American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, 1987. xv + 404pp. US\$39.50 cloth

ISBN 0-8108-2039-0

(available from James Bennett Library Services)

Although useful bibliographies of secondary sources on the Wesley brothers have appeared in the past, there has long been a need for more extensive coverage, particularly of recent literature. Betty Jarboe, a librarian, has made a brave, if not altogether successful, attempt to fill this gap. Her confessed lack of theological training and of familiarity with the eighteenth century scene are reasons for some of the problems one encounters with this work. More surprisingly, however, some bibliographical decisions, either stated or possibly assumed in the introduction, are likely to present further difficulties.

The introduction is poorly written, in some instances ambiguously phrased, and is certainly no model for a work of this kind. In terms of scope the bibliography focuses not only on the two brothers, as the title suggests, but also on their parents, Samuel and Susanna. Jarboe argues that it would be impossible to separate these four. In addition, although not announced, items featuring other members of the Wesley family are included. Among the host of works on the Methodist movement, a wise decision is made to cite only those with sections devoted to the Wesleys. Coverage is from 1791, the year of John's death, but no hint is given of a cutoff date. While some 1985 titles are included, certain major items

published in 1984 and 1985 are missing. Further, no particular audience seems to be intended. The choice of items is not at all selective; they range from the scholarly and critical to juvenile literature. A few entries include descriptive annotations. Vagueness also attaches to the paragraph on methodology. For example, "No attempt has been made to include book reviews. Those found were included, but no searching was done" (p. x). The arrangement is by format with entries listed alphabetically by author under the following headings: bibliographies, books, articles, dissertations and theses, poetry, drama, fiction, juvenile works and miscellanea. It is not clear why a final and separate section of non-English language publications should have been denied this categorization. Included under "Books", as it turns out, are essays from multi-authored works. Full citations for such volumes are to be found only under the name of the contributor whose name begins with the earliest alphabet letter. Access through the editor's name is usually not available. None of this is explained.

Classification by format requires a subject index, and here the compiler acknowledges that the indexing is not as precise as hoped for. Blanket terms are used to contain a mass of material, for example, "Church of England" has seventy entries; "Wesley, Charles: hymns" has 119, "Wesley, John: sketches", 314. The problem of dealing with the amount of biographical literature is solved arbitrarily by reverting to format and differentiating monographs *about* from sketches *of* the Wesley brothers, where sketches are either essays or articles. Allowing for the real difficulties involved in controlling the literature on such comprehensive characters, the topical index calls for a greater refinement both

historically and theologically.

Such criticisms will appear ungracious when the total achievement is considered. Jarboe has combed the relevant indexing and abstracting services, and her gathering of some 4723 entries has provided us with the most extensive coverage of the literature to date. Further, her attempt to verify these titles from the many source has been assiduous. All this merits gratitude. Of course, the spate of material being published to commemorate the 250th anniversary of John Wesley's Aldersgate Street experience will call for a rather hefty supplement. Despite reservations, this bibliography is recommended for academic libraries.

— Lawrence McIntosh
 Joint Theological Library
 University of Melbourne

An Open book: The Story of the Distribution and Production of Christian Literature by Lutherans in Australia.

Joyce Graetz

Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House,
1988. 335 pp. A\$14.95 pap.

ISBN 0-85910-466-4

This book tells the story of the use of the printed word by the Lutherans of Australia during the 150 years that they have been in this country - for edification, education and unification. The watershed of the story is the establishment of the Lutheran Publishing Company, which neatly bisects the history in 1913.

The story begins with a group of German missionaries to the Aborigines of the Adelaide area producing literature in the native language, and explores the early problems caused by the lack of books for public worship, schooling, catechetics and for private devotion, as well as the added problems of importing books (many in German) during the war. Further problems were caused by the multiplicity of supporting churches from which the literature was drawn, as well as by the multiplicity of synods which developed in Australia, whether through geographical separation, historical links or internal disputes.

The uneasy origins of the Lutheran Publishing Company, paralleled by the Lutheran Book Depot, heralded a new day for Lutheran publishing and distribution. After some tenuous attempts to work together, the two finally came together in 1967 when the two supporting churches amalgamated. By then the Lutheran Publishing Company had become the fully church-owned Lutheran Publishing House (LPH) and had branched out with retail outlets in most of the states of Australia and in New Zealand. It was the

publication of the *Lutheran Hymnal* that really put the "P" into "LPH" - after twenty-two years of cooperative effort by the joint committee of the two Lutheran churches! Since that time LPH has pursued a vigorous programme of printing, publishing, wholesale importing and retail distribution which sees it today as the largest religious publisher in Australia and the largest commercial publisher of any kind in South Australia. Through all this progress, however, it has never lost sight of its basic charter to serve the mission of the church through the provision of Christian literature in all possible formats - books, tracts, periodicals and audiovisuals.

This is a narrative history, not a critical analysis. There is no attempt to explain, for example, the theological reasons for the importing of particular publications in the early years. While the fact of the prolonged use of German - to the lasting detriment of the mission of the church - is frequently alluded to, there is only a brief reference to the reason why it occurred. Further answers to such questions may have to await the production of a theological history of Lutheranism in the future. The book is well written and easy to read. If the consistent use of abbreviations occasionally sends one to the list of abbreviations at the beginning of the book, it nevertheless speeds the flow of the narrative. The copious notes at the ends of chapters give evidence of thorough research and provide a very comprehensive bibliography of Australian Lutheran publications. There appears to be little that has escaped the notice of the writer, though the Rechner-Auricht catechism of 1863 no doubt deserved an honourable mention. Included is a select bibliography of the most important publications and a detailed and accurate index. Two appendices list books

published by LPH since 1966 and the staff of LPH (as at 1 January 1988).

Surprisingly, however, the Board of Publications, which maintains overall control on behalf of the church and determines the list of books to be published, is not included. Typically for LPH, the quality of printing and layout is impeccable, but the overall impression is marred by some inexplicably poor photography. Incredibly, also, there is no separate photograph of the General Manager, Martin Hoopmann, who has been the inspiration and driving force behind LPH for more than thirty years.

The story justifies the book's claim that LPH is "one of the success stories of religious publishing and distribution in this country." One is left wondering, therefore, why, with such a powerful and effective public relations medium at its disposal, the Lutheran Church in Australia and New Zealand does not enjoy a better public image than it currently does. The full answer to that question might well fill a book of its own; but one would venture to hope that the continuing success story of LPH will help give Lutherans themselves a greater self-awareness and self-confidence and will help to make them better understood in the wider community. This book should contribute to both.

— *Trevor Zweck*
Luther Seminary
Adelaide

What is this Thing Called Religious Education? – Summary, Critique and a New Proposal.

Terence J. Lovat

Wentworth Falls (157 Blaxland Road)

NSW: Social Science Press A\$16.95.

ISBN 0-949218-03.

This book does two things. It provides an historical perspective on developments in religion education over the last thirty years or so, focussing particularly on the underlying educational ideas and theories in vogue during the period. It also advances a proposal and some practical tips for a new model of religion education.

The book comes in three sections, with the first two concentrating on "Faith-Forming" and "Inter-Faith" models of religion education respectively. In the last section, the author proposes his "Integrated Model" and devotes two chapters to providing an outline and suggested activities for secondary and primary schools. The author recommends another volume of his as an essential companion for these two chapters.

As one who is not particularly familiar with these historical developments I can only comment as a somewhat naive but interested reader. From this perspective the book is valuable. I came away with an awakened interest in religion education and how its contemporary history reflects both the growing tolerance of Australian society and the perennial disagreements and competing theories within the world of education.

This latter and dominant theme of the book is essentially an embryonic intellectual history of recent educational ideas. As such it is problematic. Whilst its broad sweep is tantalising, it is unsatisfactory because it is cursory and obviously premised on a prior knowledge

of the area. I wonder if the intended audience, the tertiary student preparing to teach religion in schools, would have this necessary background?

A further problem is the manner in which the educational ideas are reified in an almost positivist fashion, as obvious historical building blocks in the construction of the various models. Surely this is not good history! Surely the theory-practice dialogue is more subtle than this! Further evidence of this difficulty is the author's facility in using social theory and critical reflection as a basis for curriculum theory and model building. This is rather unconvincing and reductionistic. In this vein, Stenhouse, who of all the recent curriculum theorists, is the most critical, is treated as another in the long line of those who have proposed a model. The "Stenhouse" model emerges from his reflections on education and, in particular, his skepticism about the comprehensive value of behaviorist conceptions of learning and curriculum. It would seem that Stenhouse's attempt at criticism is no defence against the model builders!

Another example is Habermas. It is understandable that his social and epistemological insights would become significant in educational thinking but I suspect basing a model on his critical theory begs the issue of the authority and responsibility of the teacher and the role of students in our schools.

In fact, the author's treatment of curriculum theory in the development of the varying models of religion education is the most unsatisfactory aspect of this volume and somewhat prejudices its significance as a descriptive and interpretive account. The book is a good example of a genre of curriculum discourse portrayed by Schwab as

representing "a flight upward, from discourse about the subject of the field to discourse about the discourse of the field, from use of principles and methods to talk about them, from grounded conclusions to the construction of models, from theory to metatheory and from metatheory to metametatheory." (Joseph J Schwab, "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum," *School Review* 78 (1969): 1-23.)

In summary, this volume is suggestive of the problems we have when we are trying to articulate a curriculum theory which is both practically focussed and theoretically sound. Teachers are not hostile to theory but they often dismiss attempts to graft social and psychological theory on to their understanding of their practice. With this style of theory building, the concerns of learning and teaching become embroiled in issues of liberation and personal meaning. Obviously, this is ultimately what education is about but there are first order questions which teachers can't avoid and which books of this nature have difficulty in addressing.

— Paul Gunning
South Australian College
of Advanced Education:
Sturt Campus.

**Missionaries to a Teenage Culture:
Religious Education in a Time of
Change.**

Marisa Crawford and Graham Rossiter,
Sydney: Christian Brothers Resource
Group, 1988 Paper, 258 pp.

This book holds promise of the possibility of a guided exploration into a relatively uncharted and very challenging terrain, namely, the religious education of the contemporary teenager. The authors move boldly into this territory with an authority born of many years reflection, discussion and scholarly research in the form and expression that religion needs to take to be recognized from within contemporary teenage culture. In many ways the book does take us into the heart of this rugged landscape, but it does not bring us as deeply into the labyrinth of present-day teenage symbols, rituals, and value-systems, or a recognition of the potential these have for young peoples' experience of God's presence as the title would lead us to believe.

Readers of Rossiter and the dual authorship of Crawford and Rossiter will be familiar with their thinking on the continuing debate regarding the emphasis in religious education; whether this should be on information/content/cognitive learning or experience/process/affective learning. The authors see *Missionaries* as complementary to, and, in many ways, an extension of, their earlier work, *Teaching Religion in Secondary Schools: Theory and Practice* (1985) - hereafter referred to as TRISS. And indeed, this is so. Chapters 2 through 14 in particular, reiterate a number of topics which have been dealt with initially in TRISS. These topics are complex, and many teachers of religion are in real need of on-going support in dealing with them.

However, one tends to lose sight of what is believed to be the main thrust of the book, namely, teenage culture and religion education. It is not until more than half-way through the book that we read about aspects of teenage culture *per se*.

In chapter 15 the authors deal with the media and the "contribution that religious education can make in helping students understand the role that television and other media play in their lives" (p163). The focus is in three areas:

1. Pseudo-sophisticated Naivety:
Television as a source of
Information.
2. The influence of television on
attitudes and behaviours.
3. Television and the 'Seduction' of
Individuality (p163)

As in the earlier chapters, the authors argue here for a "refining" of the "students' critical faculties" (p166) as being the most effective way students can counteract the detrimental influence on their values and ways of making meaning in life, that television programs and commercials can have. Short of removing teenagers from this planet there is no alternative but the development of a "critical consciousness" that can examine and critique "reality at the wider social level". (p167) Valuable sections on strategies for dealing with these are added, which can be used by both parents and teachers.

Further forays into teenage cultural territory focus on issues such as "Nuclear War" or "Problems of the Third World", "Sexual Relationships" or the threat of "AIDS". The authors firmly ground these topics in the cultural world of the teenager and, as such, they are important topics for inclusion in the religion education curriculum in a secondary school.

The book suffers from certain limitations. For example, while the title with its sub-title suggest religion teachers are (have to be?) missionaries to this somewhat inaccessible culture, only one page and a half deals with what "missionaries" might mean in this context. And then, more than a page of this is taken up describing a past model of missionaries. The authors state that "a missionary role for religion teachers in Catholic schools is even more pertinent today because young people today live in a time of unprecedented change...." (p3). While this may be true, it begs the question; do teachers in Catholic schools see themselves as "missionaries" and if they do, out of which model of missionary do they minister? While other sections of the book, e.g. chapter 7, acknowledge the fact of the religion teacher's "uneasy dedication" (p89) to the task of teaching RE, there seems to be an assumption that teachers do understand themselves as missionaries within the mission of the Church. The emphasis is on RE teachers' commitment; but the issue of the total staff having responsibility for the "catholicity" of the school, belongs here. The authors state that the "mission of the Catholic school is not in question" (p2). One assumes that this "mission" is part of the mission of the Church.

The theology of the mission of the Church has undergone significant development in this century and the contemporary "missionary" understanding of Church is considerably different from the traditional one. The model of the Church coming into a culture and "imposing" answers from outside the culture is no longer tenable. The questions are so totally new that past answers are often inadequate. But it is the mission that dictates the nature of Church, and, insofar as that nature is to be a

"sign", if the church (Catholic School?) does not actually and actively signify what it professes to be, it becomes, then, a countersign. This has been true for many teenagers, often because it is the traditional model of mission that has been in operation in schools, and this, because many teachers themselves have been more at ease with this model and its underpinning theology.

From their theological reflections and discussions concerning their task, contemporary "missionaries" have come to a whole new awareness of the role culture plays in the lives of any group of people. The gradual emergence of Contextual or Local theology is the result of this kind of rethinking, and the major question many Christians ask is, "Where is God already present in this culture?" "Where is the reality of the Jesus-event already being experienced by these people?" Does much of this understanding of "mission" and "missionary" belong to the core of the issues raised by this book? While it offers some answers to new questions many questions remain unformulated. How do Christians discover the "contours" of God or the "footprints" of Jesus Christ in the teenage pop-world, part of which, for many of them, can be akin to a religious experience? How, even, does one design the maps that might show a way into this teenage culture? Who will decide the theology out of which contemporary *Missionaries to a Teenage Culture* must work in order to be effective signs for young people? The book could have been profitably extended to encompass some treatment of these issues. Perhaps we must await *Missionaries II*!

However, these criticisms aside, this is a most valuable book. Much of its strength for religion teachers lies in the authors' continual return from the

theoretical heights to the plains of practicalities. There are numerous "How to's" throughout the book which will prove invaluable for the often harassed teachers who are confronted with such an array of "factors" to keep in mind when teaching or facilitating a religion education session with a class of contemporary teenagers. The format is set out with numerous headings which make it easy to follow, and the sprinkling of cartoons not only make "the ideas smile" but add their own brand of interpretation to the text.

Parents and teachers are well aware that an identifiable teenage sub-culture exists. They have worried about it, tried to understand it; they have fought it, condemned it, and, in many cases perhaps, have capitulated to the demands it makes on their children and on their students. So for all those on the frontiers, this is a most timely and welcome book.

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England).

The aim of *Theological Book Review* is to provide for theological librarians "...a simple, accessible guide to current publishing: academically respectable, attuned to their professional needs, containing sufficient information to assist them in their purchasing decisions and to help them physically to acquire the books" (p1).

TBR does this by selecting titles for review from a database of forthcoming books from advance information provided by publishers, booksellers and B.H. Blackwell in Oxford. For British and North American titles entries are restricted to those published within the last six months, although anglophone theology from "overseas" may be reviewed up to four years after publication date if still in print. It is intended also to include a regional survey of recent theological publishing in each issue of TBR. All of this is most admirable, but it remains to be seen whether the Management Committee can adhere to these aims in the face of publisher resistance, postal delays, recalcitrant reviewers and "problems at the printery" - one thinks it unlikely. Indeed, this first issue contains several British titles published in 1987.

Arrangement is straightforward Dewey, with an author index and list of publishers whose titles are reviewed (including postal addresses). There is no title index, which must be a major oversight. Citations are admirably

detailed, indicating series titles, ISBN, price, distributor, reprint details and other information essential to the acquisitions librarian aside from the usual author, title, publisher and date. The "reviews" are nothing more than brief content notes, sometimes only a line or two, but on the whole give *almost* enough information for the theologically trained librarian. Unfortunately, too many reviewers allow personal prejudice to show through, for example, Una Kroll on *Christianity and the*

Goddesses and Patrick Lambe on *What is Opus Dei?*

As this is inexpensively priced, it is recommended that theological and religious studies libraries subscribe for a year or two and then evaluate the usefulness of TBR.

— G E Gorman
Riverina-Murray Institute
of Higher Education.